

BARROSO YAD VASHEM

EU chief and Netanyahu talk Iran, peace July 10, 2012 12:24 AM



European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso (R) stands under pictures of Jews killed during the Holocaust at his visit to the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Jerusalem July 9, 2012. (REUTERS/Ronen Zvulun)

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: EU commission chief Jose Manuel Barroso held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Monday on Iran's nuclear program, on the second day of his trip to Israel and the West Bank.

The two leaders "discussed the importance of expanding cooperation between Israel and Europe in all areas, Iran's efforts to arm itself with nuclear weapons and the resumption of the peace talks with the Palestinians," Netanyahu's office said.

EU officials added that the two leaders "also discussed the regional situation, with president Barroso stating the EU's support for democratic change and political and economic reform in the wider neighborhood."

"They also discussed vital threats in the region and exchanged views on the ongoing diplomatic process aimed at solving the nuclear issue on Iran," the EU statement said.

Israel, the sole if undeclared nuclear power in the Middle East, has said that Iran's nuclear program poses an existential threat to the Jewish state, and that it will not rule out military action to halt Tehran's nuclear activity.

Barroso is in Israel and the Palestinian territories for a three-day visit that began yesterday with meetings in the West Bank with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad.

In his discussions Sunday, Barroso urged Israel and the Palestinians to return to negotiations, warning that the peace process “cannot become an orphan of the Arab Spring.”

Peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been on hold since late September 2010, when they ground to a halt over the issue of settlement construction. Palestinians want Israel to halt settlement activity and agree to base border discussions on the lines that existed before the 1967 War. Israel says it wants talks to resume without preconditions.

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